

Application Serial No. 10/612,475
Examiner: Aaron M. Dunwoody
Art Unit: 3679

PATENT
Docket No.: 1945.185US01

Remarks

This is in response to the non-final Office Action dated August 19, 2005. Claims 9 and 10 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, and claim 1 is amended to incorporate subject matter from claims 9 and 10. Claim 20 is added and includes subject matter from claim 1. No new matter is added. Claims 1-8 and 16-20 remain pending. Reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Claims 1-10 and 16-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The rejection states that claim 1 contains new matter, namely the recitation that the overmold portion is molecularly bonded to the body. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and respectfully request reconsideration in view of the following comments.

Preliminarily, it is noted that the subject matter at issue in this rejection is removed from claim 1 and incorporated into claim 20, which depends from claim 1. It is respectfully suggested that one skilled in the art would understand that example overmold portion 30 disclosed in the present application forms a molecular bond with coupler body 20. See Application, p. 10, ll. 1-4. For example, Wood (U.S. Patent No. 5,733,145), cited in the Office Action, illustrates that one skilled in the art at the time of invention understands the term "overmold" to mean a material that is molecularly bonded to another structure. Wood, col. 2, ll. 2-7 and 30-32; col. 4, ll. 22-28 and 44-49. In addition, the articles attached at the Appendix of the Amendment filed August 3, 2005 further illustrate that one skilled in the art would understand that overmold portion 30 forms a molecular bond with coupler body 20. For at least these reasons, it is respectfully suggested that the subject matter of claim 20 is fully supported by the application as filed and does not constitute new matter. Consideration and allowance of claim 20 are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-10 and 16-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Carstens (U.S. Patent No. 4,863,201) in view of Wood (U.S. Patent No. 5,733,145). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and respectfully request reconsideration in view of the following comments.

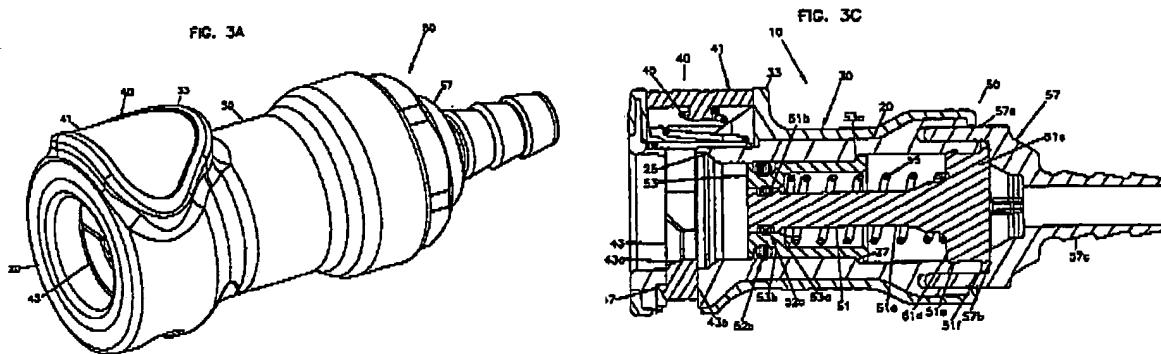
Subject matter from claims 9 and 10 is incorporated into claim 1. Claim 1 recites an overmold portion including a shroud portion partially covering said outer member of said latch assembly, said shroud portion being a wall extending outward from the outer sidewall and

Application Serial No. 10/612,475
 Examiner: Aaron M. Dunwoody
 Art Unit: 3679

PATENT
 Docket No.: 1945.185US01

adjacent and around said outer member of said latch assembly, said wall extending in a direction transverse to said outer surface, and said wall protruding from said outer surface at least a same distance as said outer member protrudes from said outer surface.

One example embodiment of an overmold portion with a shroud portion configured as recited by claim 1 is shown in Figures 3A and 3C of the present application, reprinted below.



Application, Figs. 3A and 3C. Example overmold 30 includes shroud portion 33 that extends transversely outward from outer sidewall 21, and is disposed adjacent slot 26. In example embodiments, shroud portion 33 partially covers and protects external structures, such as manually operated parts of latch assembly 40 that reside outside coupler body 20. Application, p. 9, ll. 2-11. In this example configuration, shroud portion 33 can provide protection for outer members 41, 45 of latch assembly 40. Application, p. 12, ll. 2-7.

Claim 1 recites an overmold portion. Applicants do not concede that Carstens discloses or suggests an overmold portion as recited by claim 1. As previously noted, Carstens fails to disclose or suggest an overmold portion as recited by claim 1 because the relationship between coupling member 14 and coupling body 32 is formed by a set screw 34, rather than by an overmold.

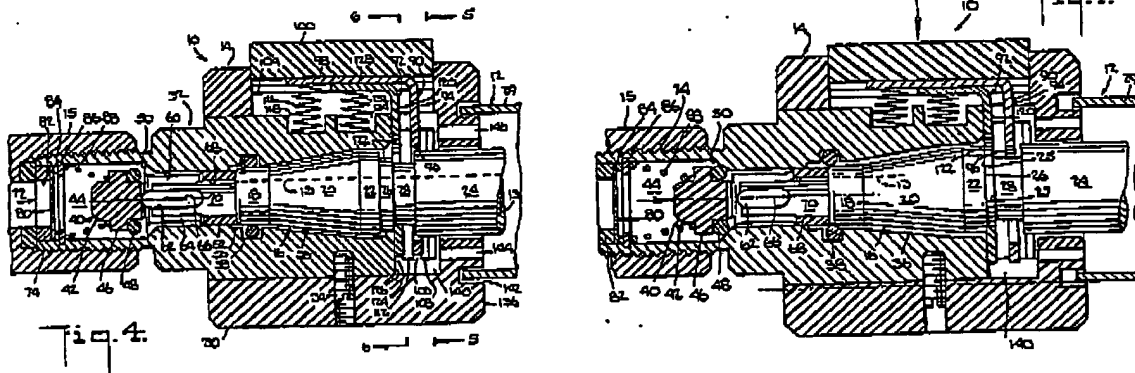
In addition, claim 1 recites that the overmold portion includes a shroud portion partially covering said outer member of said latch assembly, said shroud portion being a wall extending outward from the outer sidewall and adjacent and around said outer member of said latch assembly, said wall extending in a direction transverse to said outer surface, and said wall protruding from said outer surface at least a same distance as said outer member protrudes from

Application Serial No. 10/612,475
 Examiner: Aaron M. Dunwoody
 Art Unit: 3679

PATENT
 Docket No.: 1945.185US01

said outer surface. It is respectfully suggested that Carstens fails to disclose or suggest a shroud portion for the following reasons.

For example, coupling member 14 disclosed by Carstens does not protrude from coupling body 32 at least a same distance as button 100, as shown below.



Carstens, Figs. 4 and 7. In other words, button 100 extends a greater distance from coupling body 32 than coupling member 14, even when button 100 is depressed as shown in Figure 7.

For at least these reasons, Carstens fails to disclose or suggest an overmold portion including a shroud portion partially covering said outer member of said latch assembly, said shroud portion being a wall extending outward from the outer sidewall and adjacent and around said outer member of said latch assembly, said wall extending in a direction transverse to said outer surface, and said wall protruding from said outer surface at least a same distance as said outer member protrudes from said outer surface, as recited by claim 1.

Wood fails to remedy the shortcomings of Carstens.

Reconsideration and allowance of claim 1, as well as claims 2-8 and 16-19 that depend therefrom, are therefore respectfully requested.

Application Serial No. 10/612,475
Examiner: Aaron M. Dunwoody
Art Unit: 3679

PATENT
Docket No.: 1945.185US01

With these remarks, Applicants believe that the claims now pending are in a condition for allowance. Favorable consideration is respectfully requested. If any further questions arise, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the number listed below.

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